



Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

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BILL ANALYSIS **HOUSE BILL 614**

Bill Analysis – House Bill 614, Printer's Number 680

Sponsor – Representative Gene DiGirolamo

Synopsis – House Bill 614 would amend the Administrative Code of 1929 to establish a Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

Summary – House Bill 614 would create the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, which would include a Bureau of Prevention and Intervention, a Bureau of Treatment, and a Bureau of Administration. A Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs would be appointed as head of the Department.

The legislation would provide for the powers and duties of the new Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, including the development of a State Plan for the control, prevention, intervention, treatment, rehabilitation, research, education, and training aspects of drug and alcohol abuse problems. The contents of the State Plan are included in the legislation.

In developing the initial State Plan, and prior to its amendment each year, the Department would be required to hold a public hearing. The promulgation of the State Plan must also conform to the procedure contained in the Commonwealth Documents Law.

The new Department would be charged with allocating responsibility for all services, programs, and other efforts provided for in the State Plan among the appropriate departments, agencies, and other State personnel. The Department would be required to gather and publish statistics pertaining to drug and alcohol abuse and dependence, and promulgate regulations specifying uniform statistics to be obtained, records to be maintained, and reports to be submitted.

Under the provisions of the legislation, the new Department would be required to establish an information center on all published and unpublished data and information on the problems of drug and alcohol abuse and dependence. All appropriate state and local departments, agencies,

institutions and others engaged in implementing the State Plan are required to submit annual reports to the Department detailing activities and recommending amendments to the plan. The

Department would also be authorized to direct a performance audit of any activity that is engaged in pursuant to the State Plan.

The legislation requires that the new Department to submit an annual report to the General Assembly, which would include actions taken, services provided, and funds expended, as well as an evaluation of their effectiveness. The final duties under the provisions of the legislation would be for the Department to make provision for facilities in each city or region or catchment area to provide information about the total Commonwealth drug and alcohol abuse and drug and alcohol dependency programs and services.

House Bill 614 would transfer all personnel, files, contracts, and obligations in the Department of Health that are associated with drug and alcohol abuse to the new Department. All personnel positions in the new Department would be deemed “classified service” as defined in the Civil Service Act. All regulations, permits, orders, and similar actions of the Department of Health or any department, agency, board, or commission would remain in effect until modified, superseded, or changed by the new Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs. The current Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse would be recognized as the advisory council to the new Department.

Appropriate acts and parts of acts that are inconsistent with this legislation would be repealed.

In addition to the provisions creating the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and providing for its duties, House Bill 614 would provide for a number of state agency name changes -- from “Commerce” to “Community and Economic Development” and from “Environmental Resources” to “Environmental Protection” or “Conservation and Natural Resources.” House Bill 614 would eliminate references to the “Department of Community Affairs.”

The act would take effect in 60 days.